

# 2007 Fact Sheet

## Teens at Work Project Occupational Health Surveillance Program Massachusetts Department of Public Health

### Non-Fatal Work-Related Injuries to Massachusetts Teens, 2000-2004 DEPARTMENT STORES

The findings presented in this fact sheet cover only non-fatal injuries to Massachusetts teens working in department stores and discount stores. These injuries were identified by the *Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project (TAW)* during the calendar years 2000-2004 using data from workers' compensation claims (WC) and hospital emergency departments (ED). See our publication "Non-Fatal Work-Related Injuries to Massachusetts Teens, 2000-2004, An Overview" for a detailed description of the project. Our overview and industry-specific fact sheets are all available on the TAW website: [www.mass.gov/dph/teensatwork](http://www.mass.gov/dph/teensatwork).

## Overview

Department stores are not a major employer of young people in Massachusetts. From 2000 through 2004, only 2% of employed 15- to 17-year-olds worked in these stores<sup>1</sup>. Yet, approximately 4% (84) of the 2,119 work-related injuries to teens (for which industry was known) identified by the TAW project during this time period happened in this industry. Nearly 72% (60) of these injuries were identified through workers' compensation data and 29% (24) were identified through emergency department data. Following are the highlights of our most recent findings on injuries to teens working in Massachusetts department stores.

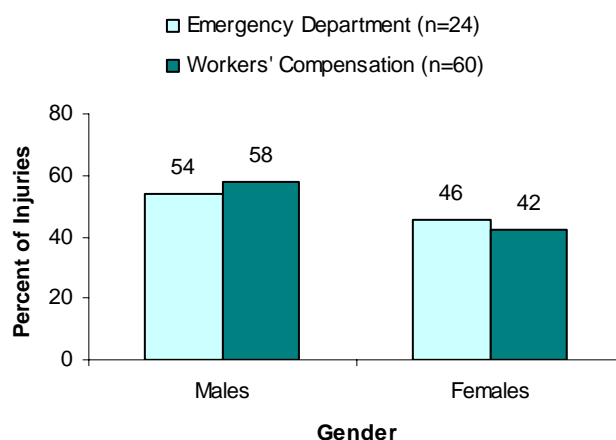
## Injuries by Gender

Among young workers in department stores, males sustained more injuries than females (Figure 1). Males appeared slightly more often in the WC data than the ED data, while the opposite was true for females.

## Injuries by Age Group

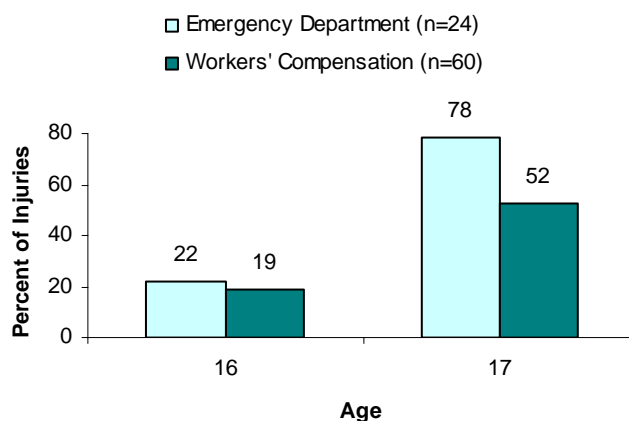
There were no reported injuries to 14- and 15-year-olds working in department stores during this time period. The majority of injuries in both data sets occurred to 17-year-olds (Figure 2).

**Figure 1. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Department Stores, by Gender and Data Source, Massachusetts, 2000-2004**



Note: Of the 84 injuries identified in this time period, there was 1 WC case for which gender was missing. This case was not included in the calculations.  
Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

**Figure 2. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Department Stores, by Age and Data Source, Massachusetts, 2000-2004**



Note: Of the 84 injuries identified in this time period, there was 1 ED case for which age was missing. This case was not included in the calculations.  
Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

<sup>1</sup>U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (2000-2004). Current Population Survey. Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

## Injuries by Type

Within both data sets, “sprains, strains, and tears” were the most common injury types identified among teens working in department stores (Figure 3). Far behind this category were “cuts, lacerations, and punctures” and “bruises, contusions, and crushings.”

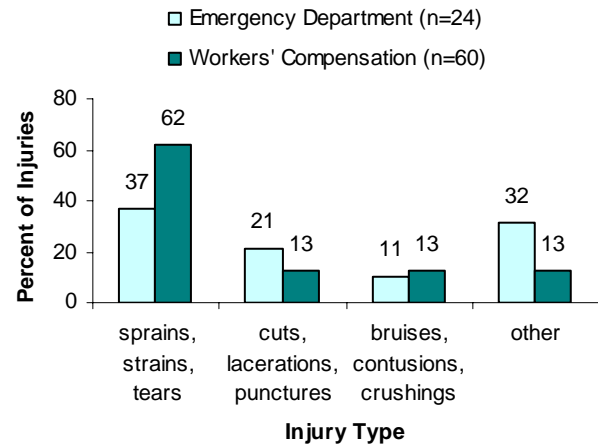
## Injury Type by Gender

The most common type of injury among both males and females working in department stores was “sprains, strains, and tears” (Figure 4), and females sustained more sprains than males. Males sustained far more “cuts, lacerations, and punctures” than females.

I was in the stock room picking up hangers off the ground and placing them into boxes or onto a hanger rack. My boss ordered me over the intercom (something he had been doing all day; he kept assigning me task after task that had nothing to do with my job description) to come up to the cash register to complete another task. I was attempting to leave the stock room to go out onto the main floor when I tripped over a stray hanger box and fell flat on the cement floor. I was able to get up, and while my knee hurt, I did manage to make my way to the cashier's area with a limp. I told my boss what had occurred, but finished working my shift. I went home at the end of the workday and told my mom what had happened. She told me I should go to work the next day and fill out an accident report. I did, but had a supervisor interact with my boss on my behalf, since I didn't want to interact with him further (he was the one who overworked me in the first place...). The form was filled out and filed, and my boss came over to apologize to me. I went home, although my knee continued to hurt and my back began to as well. I made an appointment with my pediatrician the next day.

~17-year-old cashier

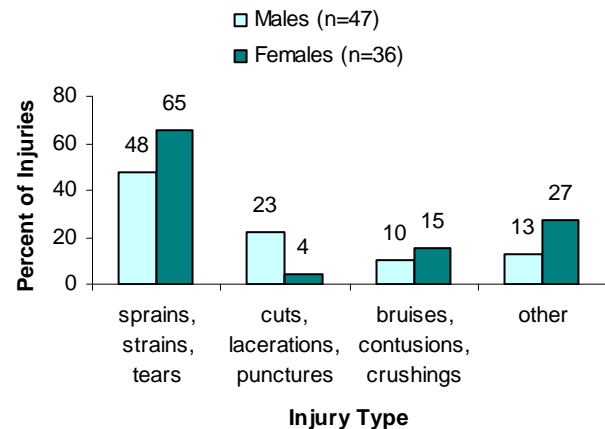
**Figure 3. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Department Stores, by Injury Type and Data Source, Massachusetts, 2000-2004**



Note: Of the 84 injuries identified in this time period, there were 18 cases (5 from ED and 13 from WC) for which injury type was unknown. These cases were not included in the calculations.

Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

**Figure 4. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Department Stores, by Injury Type and Gender, Massachusetts, 2000-2004**



Note: Of the 83 injuries identified in this time period for which gender was known, there were 17 cases (7 males and 10 females) for which injury type was unknown. These cases were not included in the calculations.

Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

## Injury Type by Age

“Sprains, strains, and tears” were the most common injuries among both 16- and 17-year-olds (Figure 5), with 17-year-olds sustaining far more sprains than 16-year-olds. All other injuries fell far behind these.

## Sprains, Strains, and Tears by Body Part Affected

Sixty-three percent of “sprains, strains, and tears” sustained by teens working in department stores involved the back (Figure 6). Of the 35 “sprains, strains, and tears,” information about the manner in which the injury was inflicted was available for 24 (69%). Twenty-one (88%) of the “sprains, strains, and tears” were caused by bodily reaction and exertion; lifting accounted for 10 (42%), while slips and trips were an additional 4 (17%) of the “sprains, strains, and tears.”

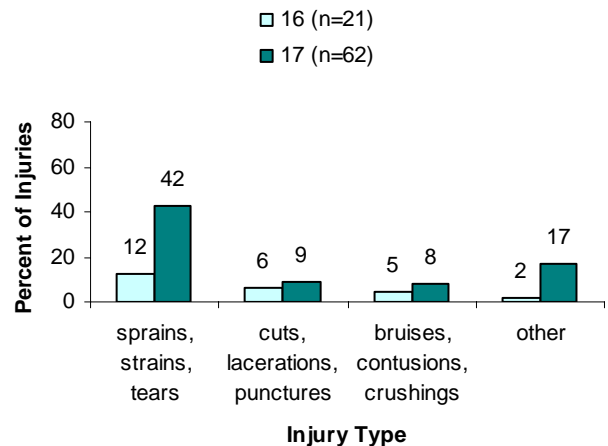
## Cuts, Lacerations, and Punctures by Body Part Affected

Half of the “cuts, lacerations, and punctures” sustained by teens working in department stores were to the hand (Figure 7). Due to the small numbers, there was no information available about the source of cuts.

I was working as a cashier in the lay-away department. I went to the back to get a box and stood on the top step of a 5 foot ladder. As I got the first box down, a second box started to fall. I turned my body and felt my knee pop as I fell to the ground. I tore my ACL and a ligament in my right knee, and lost more than 3 months of work. I need to have surgery soon on my knee.

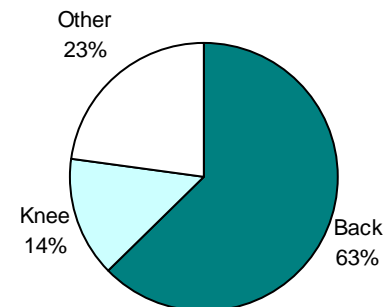
~ 17-year-old cashier

**Figure 5. Work-Related Injuries to Teens under Age 18 in Department Stores, by Injury Type and Age, Massachusetts, 2000-2004**



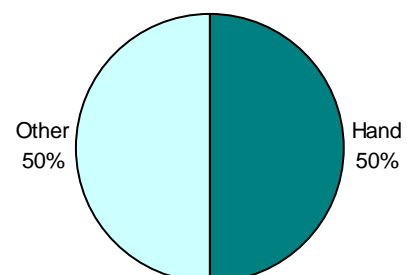
Note: Of the 83 injuries identified in this time period for which age at time of injury was known, there were 17 cases (5 from 16-year-olds and 12 from 17-year-olds) for which injury type was unknown. These cases were not included in the calculations.  
Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

**Figure 6. Work-Related Sprains, Strains, and Tears to Teens under Age 18 in Department Stores, by Body Part Affected, Massachusetts, 2000-2004 (n=35)**



Note: Of the 36 “sprains, strains, and tears” identified in this time period, there was 1 for which body part affected was unknown. This case was not included in the calculations.  
Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

**Figure 7. Work-Related Cuts, Lacerations, and Punctures to Teens under Age 18 in Department Stores, by Body Part Affected, Massachusetts, 2000-2004 (n=10)**



Source: Teens at Work: Injury Surveillance and Prevention Project

## What Injured Teens Have to Say

Since the project's inception in 1993, *Teens at Work Project* staff have completed phone interviews with 34 young department store workers injured on-the-job. While the information from these interviews is not necessarily representative of all young department store workers who have been injured, it nevertheless provides some important insights.

Of these interviewed teens:

- Fifty percent reported they had received no on-the-job training about how to work safely and avoid injury.
- Nine percent reported they had no work permits for their jobs at the time they were injured. **NOTE:** Massachusetts child labor laws require work permits which are obtained through the school district where the teen resides or attends school.
- As a result of their injuries, teens reported they could not perform their usual activities for an average of 35 days.
- Sixty-five percent believed their injuries were preventable.
- Nine percent reported that no supervisor or person responsible for supervising them was on the premises at the time of injury.

**If you have any questions about the information presented here, or would like to learn more about the *Teens at Work Project*, contact Project Coordinator, Beatriz Pazos Vautin at 617-624-5677.**

